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NOTES AND NEWS

The problem of school attendance is one of the fundamental problems of our educational situation. Superintendent D. C. Gile, of Marshfield, Wis., offers some interesting data in connection with the problem. The following tables were prepared in the Marshfield schools:

TABLE I
AVERAGE ATTENDANCE BY GRADES

	GRADE												
	Kg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Boys.....	37	65	61	42	42	29	36	17	26	26	21	8	11
Girls.....	29	59	40	33	35	37	25	27	35	32	26	19	13
Total.....	66	124	101	75	77	66	61	44	61	58	47	27	24

In general the number of boys above Grade 6 is much less than it is below that grade. The boys outnumber the girls as far as Grade 6 but the girls outnumber the boys in grades beyond the sixth. The following table will show the relative numbers of boys and girls in school, by ages:

TABLE II

	AGES																
	Below 5	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Boys.....	12	27	37	53	36	32	23	32	26	36	34	38	18	13	2	0	0
Girls.....	9	24	36	30	31	30	28	32	29	39	40	24	20	18	7	4	1
Total.....	21	51	73	83	67	62	51	64	55	75	74	62	38	31	9	4	1

This table shows that the boys outnumber the girls up to nine years of age and that beyond this age the girls outnumber the boys except at age 15. Table I shows that in grades above the seventh a decided increase in numbers of both sexes is noticeable. This is due to the fact that parochial and rural schools send many of their pupils to the public schools after the eighth grade. Aside from this influx from parochial and rural schools, there is a decided falling off in the numbers of both sexes above the fifth grade, but the decrease is more marked among the boys than among the girls.

Is this falling off to be attributed to the demands upon the boys for help in the support of the family? Marshfield is not, to any great degree,

an industrial center. Hence, this reason does not satisfy. We may find some help by comparing averages of boys and girls by grades:

TABLE III

	GRADE												
	Kg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Boys.....	4.8	6.3	7.9	9.1	10.8	11.9	12.6	13.2	14.1	14.8	15.3	15.8	16.9
Girls.....	4.8	6.2	7.4	9.	10.3	11.5	11.9	13.2	13.7	14.8	15.6	16.5	17.9

It will be noted from this table that in the grades below the high school the average age of the boys is greater than that of the girls. This fact is reversed in the high school. In the grades it means that though the boys are possibly as able, yet they do not progress as rapidly as the girls. In the high school, the boys who have kept up with their grade remain to the end or nearly so; while the girls who have fallen behind their grade do not find it as profitable to go to work as to remain at school.

All this seems to indicate that the work of the grades is more attractive to, or more in accord with the needs of, the girl than the boy. The lagging, backward, quitting boy needs attention. He drops out of school after the sixth grade and becomes a floater. This is, of course, not merely a school question, but a general social problem, in which the parents should have a share.

The parents' side of this question is a rather uncertain field. There is a large amount of doubt, in its way quite natural, mixed with our current feelings toward popular education and the public school. An English school journal reports a mother who took her little boy away from the day school to which he had been sent, because he liked his lessons, and cried if he was kept at home. The mother said that "there must be something wrong" with such a topsy-turvy state of affairs. But, an American daily paper said recently, rather cynically, that "The boy who cries to go to school needs investigating." And, in the same general vein, a writer in a recent number of the *Boston Herald* in refuting some remarks made by that paper on the subject of truancy, said: "With the system now in operation in this city, with the help of twenty-three able and faithful truant officers, the teachers, and the police force of the city, nearly every child of school age is connected with some school and registered there. . . . There are school districts where a real truant is as rare as a white blackbird."

In the Jefferson City (Mo.) schools the following directions are given to the teachers to be used in studying the health conditions of the individual children in the schools.

Facts to be ascertained:

1. Does the pupil habitually suffer from inflamed lids or eyes?

2. Does the pupil fail to read the majority of the letters in the XX line of the Snelling's Test Types with either eye?

3. Do the eyes and head habitually grow weary and painful after study?

4. Does the pupil appear to be cross-eyed?

5. Does the pupil complain of earache in either ear?

6. Does matter (pus) or foul odor proceed from either ear?

7. Does the pupil fail to hear an ordinary voice at 20 feet in a quiet room? Each ear should be tested by having the pupil hold his hand over first one ear and then the other. The pupil should close his eyes during the test.

8. Is the pupil frequently subject to "colds in the head"? Discharges from the nose and throat?

9. Is the pupil an habitual "mouth-breather"?

If an affirmative answer is returned to any of these questions the pupil is given a printed card of warning to be taken to the parents or guardians. A complete record of the whole transaction is kept.

Professor M. E. Sadler has recently been pressing a rather comprehensive programme upon the consideration of the English school world. It is worthy the attention of American educators, as well. He proposes: (1) to reduce the size of classes in all elementary schools; (2) to institute a competent system of medical inspection and care of children; (3) to provide more and better playground space in connection with the schools; (4) to raise the age limit for compulsory attendance; (5) to make provision for all the children, so that none need be put on half-time; (6) to attempt to provide special, adequate social care for all children through the critical period of adolescence; (7) and he is particularly interested in making thoughtful care for the quality of the coming generation a matter of social provision, by laying a statutory obligation upon all employers of the young, to allow all children to attend classes of some sort up to the age of seventeen. This last consideration lies close to the heart of his demands for a more comprehensive system of continuation schools, which shall be seriously accepted by the public, and for which all employers of boys and girls shall make allowance in their working schedules.

The State Educational Association of Pennsylvania is engaged in making a canvass of the teachers of the state for a larger membership. This association has been in existence for more than fifty years, yet, the president states, most of the teachers of the state seem to hold aloof and are unwilling to lend their influence to the organization. In an appeal to the teachers of the state some rather interesting data are given. For instance, it is reported that Connecticut enrolls 90 per cent. of its teachers in the state association; Rhode Island, 88 per cent.; New Jersey, 65 per cent.; New Mexico, 50 per cent.; California, 27 per cent.; Idaho, 25 per cent.; Alabama, 18 per cent. Pennsylvania falls below these figures. Seeking for informa-

tion from other states, Alabama reports its state association "is decidedly the leading force in educational advancement;" California, that "its voice is very potent in legislation;" Florida, that "the school interests of the state cannot afford to be without such an association;" Kentucky, that "it is the greatest force in the state;" and so on.

It may not be out of place, in this connection, to ask whether Pennsylvania is not suffering from a serious weakening of the democratic ideal, in education, as in a great many other lines. There is, certainly, some connection between the apathy of the teaching forces of the state and that apathy in politics which has become the shame of the state. But, of course, Pennsylvania does not stand alone in these respects.

Syracuse (N. Y.) reports a very interesting effort along the line of industrial training. The Artisan School has been established by the manufacturers of Syracuse to furnish a place where boys can learn certain trades. The boys work seven and one-half hours a day at 8 cents an hour. They have, beside this, an hour of drawing, talks, shop mathematics, etc., and they are required to keep up notebooks covering all their work. The course covers fifteen months, and leads to a good degree of efficiency in the particular trades. It remains to be seen whether, on the one hand, the school will be able to succeed financially, and, on the other, whether such training will really meet the full demands of a democratic citizenship.

Special attention should be called to the meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the N. E. A., which will be held in Chicago, February 23, 24, and 25. Beside the Department of Superintendence, the National Society for the Scientific Study of Education, the Society of College Teachers of Education, the National Committee on Agricultural Education, and the Conference of State Superintendents of Education, as well as the Educational Press Association, will meet at the same time and under the same general auspices as that of the Department of Superintendence. The preliminary programme promises meetings of unusual interest. The question of waste in school work, the problem of the delinquent pupil, industrial education, school hygiene, are among the questions to be discussed in the Department of Superintendence. There will be also the usual round-table discussions which are frequently of so much more importance than the papers presented in the programme. The Society of College Teachers of Education will discuss observation and practice work in university departments of education. The question is one that is peculiarly interesting to superintendents and teachers of elementary schools. Application to Mr. Irwin Shepard, Secretary of the N. E. A., Winona, Minn., will bring information regarding railroad rates, ticket conditions, and other detail.